

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4120

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 9520

E. O. 11652: DECLASSIFIED JUNE 19, 1974

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, OSCI, CH, TH

SUBJ: POSSIBLE APPROACH TO PRC FOR COOPERATION IN US ARMY

MIGRATORY BIRDS MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

BEGIN SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES BACKGROUND ON A LONG-
STANDING

US ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECT, ATTACHED TO THE SEATO MEDICAL
RESEARCH LABORATORY SINCE 1963, CONCERNING POSSIBLE TRANSMISSION
OF DISEASES BY MIGRATORY BIRDS IN ASIA AND RECOMMENDS THAT DEPT
ASK AMB BRUCE TO EXPLORE WITH APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN PEKING
POSSIBILITY OF CHINESE COOPERATION IN SUPPLYING DATA ON RINGED BIRDS
DISCOVERED IN PRC WHICH MAY BE AVAILABLE NOW OR IN THE FUTURE.
END SUMMARY.

1. FROM 1950 TO 1958 INTENSIVE RESEARCH RE EPIDEMIOLOGY
OF VIRUS DISEASE KNOWN AS JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS WAS MADE AT
US ARMY 406 TH MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY AT TOKYO. AS RESULT IT
BECAME EVIDENT THAT WILD BIRDS WERE INVOLVED IN THE EPIZOOLOGY
OF THIS DISEASE SINCE IT WAS SHOWN TO INVOLVE MAN AND MANY OTHER
ANIMALS. SUCH DISEASE IS KNOWN AS A " ZOONOSIS".

2. BETWEEN 1958 AND 1963 STUDIES WITH BIRDS IN MALAYA REVEALED
THAT THEY WERE INVOLVED NOT ONLY WITH JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS WHICH
WAS
PREVALENT THERE, BUT ALSO SERVED AS HOSTS FOR MITE VECTORS OF
IMPORTANT RICKETTSIAL DISEASE KNOWN AS SCRUB TYPHUS.

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3. DURING THESE YEARS DR. H. E. MCCLURE, ORNITHOLOGIST, HAD BEEN URGING STUDY OF BIRD MOVEMENTS TO SEE IF ANY OF THE PERIODICAL AND NON- PERIODICAL OUTBREAKS OF THESE DISEASES COULD BE RELATED TO BIRD MIGRATION OR DISPERSAL. THIS STUDY WAS NOT TO BE DIRECTED TOWARDS CONTROLLING BIRDS TO PREVENT SPREAD OF DISEASES BUT RATHER TO ACCUMULATE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MOVEMENTS SO THAT PUBLIC HEALTH DOCTORS AND EPIDEMIOLOGISTS COULD MORE INTELLIGENTLY PREDICT OUTBREAKS OF DISEASE AND UNDERSTAND COMPLEX ECOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED.

4. IN 1963 SUCH A RESEARCH PROJECT KNOWN AS THE MIGRATORY ANIMAL PATHOLOGICAL SURVEY (MAPS) WAS SPONSORED BY THE US ARMY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP AS AN ELEMENT OF THE US COMPONENT OF THE SEATO MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY IN BANGKOK. THE OBJECTIVES WERE TO DETERMINE THE MOVEMENTS OF MIGRATORY ANIMALS, MAINLY BIRDS, AND TO STUDY BOTH THEIR EXTERNAL PARASITES THAT MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE AND ALSO THE INCIDENCE OF AVIAN MALARIA.

5. FUNDS WERE MADE AVAILABLE FOR GRANT TO MUSEUMS OR UNIVERSITIES IN ASIA WHICH HAD SCIENTISTS ON THEIR STAFFS CAPABLE OF DIRECTING AND CARRYING ON SUCH RESEARCH. THESE GRANTS WERE, OF COURSE, CONDITIONED BY THE POLITICAL SITUATION THEN PREVAILING AND WERE GIVEN TO INSTITUTIONS IN JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA , TAIWAN, HONG KONG, PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, MALAYSIA, SABAH, SARAWAK, INDONESIA , SINGAPORE, AND INDIA. MAIN TECHNIQUE OF FIELD TEAMS WAS TO CAPTURE BIRDS, REMOVE REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES OF ENTOPARASITES AND BAND AND RELEASE THE BIRDS. AT INCEPTION OF PROJECT IT APPEARED THAT HONG KONG WAS MOST ACCEPTABLE ADDRESS FOR SCIENTISTS OF ALL CREEDS TO REPORT BIRD RECOVERIES AND THEREBY FACILITATE THIS NON- POLITICAL RESEARCH PROJECT. CONSEQUENTLY, ALL BIRD RINGS BORE THE RETURN ADDRESS " BOX 3443 HONG KONG". BIRD RECOVERYHETTERS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED FROM MOST ASIAN COUNTRIES; INCLUDING NORTH KOREA.

6. INITIALLY THERE WAS SOME EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH DR. CHENG TSO- HSIN OF THE ACADEMY SINICA BUT CONTACT WAS BROKEN

AND PROJECT NEVER RECEIVED DATA ON BIRD RECOVERIES IN PRC.

7. THE MAPS PROGRAM LASTED FOR EIGHT YEARS, OR UNTIL 1971 WHEN FUNDS FOR FIELD WORK WERE NO LONGER AVAILABLE. DURING THIS PERIOD FIELD TEAMS Banded MORE THAN A MILLION BIRDS AND MADE THOUSANDS

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OF COLLECTIONS OF PARASITES. FINAL REPORT ON THESE ECTOPARASITES HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND PUBLISHED.

8. PROJECT RECEIVED DATA ON THOUSANDS OF RECOVERIES OF RINGED BIRDS

SUFFICIENT TO SHOW MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS OF BIRDS OVER MUCH OF EASTERN ASIA. MOST OF THE RECOVERY REPORTS WERE LETTERS FROM FARMERS OR SPORTSMEN WHO FOUND, SNARED OR SHOT RINGED BIRDS. LETTERS WERE RECEIVED FROM ALL COUNTRIES OF EASTERN ASIA EXCEPT MONOGOLIA AND PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.
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9. MORE THAN 200,000 BIRDS WERE RINGED IN KOREA AND JAPAN AND MORE THAN 300,000 IN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA. RECOVERIES FROM AMUR RIVER VALLEY OF USSR, FROM NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA, FROM THAILAND AND OTHER SEA COUNTRIES INDICATE THAT BULK OF THE MIGRATORY BIRDS CROSSED CHINA IN THEIR JOURNEYS NORTH AND SOUTH. BASES UPON EXTRAPOLATION FROM NUMBERS RINGED AND NUMBERS RECOVERED IN PHILIPPINES AND OTHER COUNTRIES IT IS BELIEVED THAT BETWEEN ONE AND TWO THOUSAND RINGED BIRDS MUST HAVE BEEN CAPTURED OR SHOT IN CHINA. POSSIBLY SOME OF THESE HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THE ACADEMY SINICA OR TO A GAME MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION IN PEKING. (IN CASE OF SIBERIA, HUNTERS HAVE REPORTED RECOVERIES TO MOSCOW, POSSIBLY THROUGH LOCAL GAME PROTECTIVE ORGANIZATION.)

10. DR. MCCLURE IS NOW PREPARING A BOOK WHICH WILL PRESENT RESULTS OF THE STUDY OF MOVEMENTS OF BIRDS IN ASIA SO THAT EPIDEMIOLOGISTS AND ECOLOGISTS CAN USE DATA FOR MEDICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PURPOSES. CHINA IS A GREAT VOID SINCE NOTHING IS KNOWN RE ROUTES FOLLOWED BY THESE MIGRANT BIRDS ACROSS THAT VAST AREA OF DESERTS, MOUNTAIN RANGES, AND FERTILE COASTAL PLAINS.

11. IN HOPE THAT SOME RINGS HAVE REACHED OR WILL REACH OFFICIAL
PRC SOURCES, DR. MCCLURE WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE IT IF DEPT
WOULD ASK AMB BRUCE TO EXPLAIN ABOVE BACKGROUND ON THIS RESEARCH
PROJECT TO APPROPRIATE PRC AUTHORITIES TO SEE IF THEY WOULD BE
WILLING TO RELEASE THIS INFORMATION TO HIM FOR TRANSMITTAL TO
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DR. MCCLURE. INFO DESIRED IS RING NUMBER, DATE AND PLACE OF
RECOVERY. THIS INFO ADDED TO THAT ALREADY AVAILABLE WOULD GREATLY
ENHANCE VALUE OF ENTIRE STUDY WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED AND MADE
AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED SCIENTISTS IN ALL COUNTRIES.

12. EMB RECOMMENDS THAT DEPT TRANSMIT DR. MCCLURE' S REQUEST TO AMB
BRUCE WITH ITS ENDORSEMENT. WE THINK AMB SHOULD FRANKLY EXPLAIN
BACKGROUND OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT, INCLUDING SOURCE OF US
FUNDING
AND FACT THAT IT IS ATTACHED TO A SEATO- LABEL MEDICAL RESEARCH
LABORATORY, SINCE THESE FACTS ARE IN PUBLIC DOMAIN. THE SEATO
MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1960 IN FURTHERANCE
OF UNDERTAKING BY MANILA PACT MEMBERS TO COOPERATE IN MEASURES
DESIGNED TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND SOCIAL WELL- BEING.
IT CONSISTS OF A THAI COMPONENT AND A US COMPONENT SPONSORED BY THE
WALTER REED ARMY INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH. THE MIGRATORY ANIMAL
PATHOLOGICAL SURVEY IS AN ELEMENT OF THAT US COMPONENT.

13. COL. BUSER, DIRECTOR OF WALTER REED ARMY INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH,
IS FAMILIAR WITH PROJECT AND CAN SUPPLY ANY ADDITIONAL INFO
REQUIRED.

14. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPT TRANSMIT DR. MCCLURE' S REQUEST
WITH ITS ENDORSEMENT TO AMB BRUCE.
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